

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER is a monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc, Box 4476 GPO Sydney 2001. To advertise in this magazine, please contact the Business Manager.

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THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS INCORPORATED was founded in 1927. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 8 pm at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station). Visitors and prospective members are welcome any Wednesday.

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From The Editor

On a recent daywalk I was asked by a fairly new member (who shall remain nameless) "what are the main things I should consider when preparing to lead my first Club walk" (or words to that effect). After a little more chat I found that she was contemplating a two day walk but felt reluctant to put it on the programme because of her inexperience and the fear of not doing it very well.

Then when I tried to summarise some of the main points that I would try to cover, I found that there is quite a lot to think about, and I also soon realised, from the questions that were asked, that the very same questions are probably in the minds of many other prospective leaders. From there it wasn't much of a jump to the conclusion that the answers should be available from our own membership.

There seems to be a big void in the available written information on this subject. In fact there may not be anything at all specifically aimed at assisting the leader.

It would be of great assistance to many members if there was some sort of Club handbook for leaders that they could use as a reference manual to help them tidy up all the loose ends and thus become more confident and more professional.

I would be pleased to hear from any members who have had thoughts about putting a walk on the programme but keep putting it off because of this very problem. If we can get a little feedback from some of you as to what you believe should be available, we might be able to do something about it. Possibly some of our experienced leaders can put together some sort of "Walks Planner" to help rookie leaders plan and execute their first walks.

Write to me - please. Ed

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BUSHWALKING

Paul Sharp (rpt from 2/84)

I set out below, from my vast experience of bushwalking, a few simple facts that will surely help the less experienced, the blind and the lame more fully to enjoy that most spiritual and uplifting of all man's (sorry, dears, person's) activities.

1. 75% of all journeys, in either direction, are up hill.
2. However much you eat from it, the pack gets heavier rather than lighter.
3. The map is wrong.
4. There is (always) a magnetic anomaly (maybe ironstone) in the area that causes the compass to be misleading.
5. The last pair of boots was more comfortable.
6. The job of the leader is to be way out in front, to prove that he is the leader.
7. The best camping spot is a little farther on.
8. Halfway through the journey back it is "only about five minutes to the cars".
9. An easy descent to, crossing of, and ascent from, Pigeon House Gorge exists, and is easy to find.
10. The "Beers for Bushwalkers Association" actually exists.
11. Women are better walkers than men.
12. It's only now that this heavy storm has set in that the tent has suddenly sprung a leak.
13. It doesn't matter if you can't find the exact ridge where the trail is indicated. One ridge is as good as another.
14. My boots are waterproof.
15. Leeches won't attack you if you are smoking.
16. Lung cancer is good for you.
17. Waterproof matches are.
18. It's easy to light a fire in the heaviest rain.
19. The pass used to be here last time I came.
20. Men are better walkers than women.
21. At Wog Wog they love you.
22. Bushwalking is relaxing, and good for you.
23. Dot is an orthodox conservative.
24. Inflatable mattresses are just as good when they are punctured.
25. I like walking in this heavy fog - it's a good test

of navigation.

26. No, you don't subtract the magnetic deviation, you add it.
27. A competent bushwalker can always find his way from the sun.
28. "The bush is not a rubbish dump"
29. This river never floods.
30. Members of S.B.W. don't get lost. □

MACPAC INFORMATION NIGHT

All SBW members and interested friends are invited to attend an evening on Thursday 27th October at which a representative of Macpac in New Zealand will display and discuss the latest gear from this leading designer and manufacturer of bushwalking equipment and clothing.

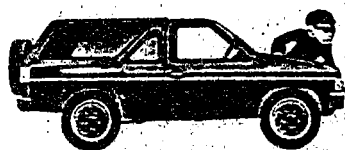
This demonstration will take place in the Trelawney Room on the ground floor of Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre 16 Fitzroy Street Kirribilli at 7:45 pm.

Tea and coffee will be served.

For further information contact:

John Hogan 02 725 1890.

NOTICE



THIEVES ARE ACTIVE AT A NUMBER OF LOCATIONS IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS AND KANANGRA BOYD NATIONAL PARKS.

THEY ARE PARTICULARLY ACTIVE DURING LONG WEEKENDS WHILST CARS ARE LEFT UNATTENDED.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION OR HAVE BEEN ROBBED FROM ANY LOCATION IN THESE OR OTHER NATIONAL PARKS PLEASE CONTACT:

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PHONE/FAX (02) 548 1228**

From The Clubroom

Maurice Smith

Andes Adventures

Maureen Carter, SBW's Secretary, was our guest presenter on the evening of 28 September with her slides of two walking holidays in South America. The appeal of the area was evident because even before the show started there was standing room only in the club room.

To start the proceedings Maureen "drew" a map of South America on the slide screen using an imaginary pen. Naturally, this action caused quite a few comments from the audience. Maureen's holidays, (with her husband David also a member of SBW) were in 1989 to Peru, and in early 1994 to Patagonia. Unfortunately, David was not able to be present on the evening to defend himself.

The Peruvian trip of 1989 took in many of the ruins of the Incas including the "lost city" of Macchu Pichu (sorry if the spelling is not correct). The architecture and building construction techniques

used in the building of the walls and so on was admired by all.

The snow covered peaks, seemingly innumerable and endless glaciers were indeed spectacular. As were the glacial lakes. It didn't take much imagination to figure out what the water temperature of those lakes would be like.

The 1994 holiday started off with a slide visit to the Iguazu Falls, a "mere" four kilometres wide. From there we were taken by slides to Patagonia, an area comprising parts of Argentina and Chile in the southern part of South America. It is strange area, comprising huge mountains, and flat desolate tundra like plains. However, the area is quite dry and extremely windy. □

The Burragorang Valley

Athel Molesworth. Newcastle Bushwalkers Club.

"There are still bushwalkers who remember the beauty of the Burragorang Valley before it went under the waters" writes Alex Colley (July '94 SBW mag.)

This revived my memories of a walk from Wentworth Falls to Picton over an October long weekend in 1945. A fellow evening student of Sydney University, who worked at the Lands Department and had maps of the area, and I decided we would do the 60 miles in the three days as a last chance before the area was flooded. We had planned it for a four day at Easter, but rain had washed that out. Three days meant steady slogging but it was our last chance to see the valley.

Losing the map halfway didn't help and resulted in climbing over spurs to avoid detouring and losing time. It was with great relief that we finished up walking along the single track rail line to make it to the Picton station just in time to catch the 4 pm train back to Sydney. All we could think of was how some lucky people had been splashing in the waters at the junction of the Cox and the Nattai on a hot summery day whilst we could not stop in our endless rush.

By the way-no tent, just ground sheets! But we saw the valley. □

THE GREEN SEASON

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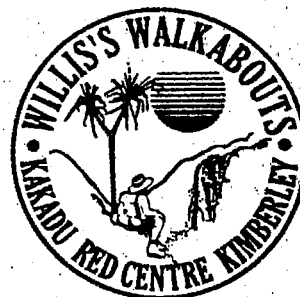
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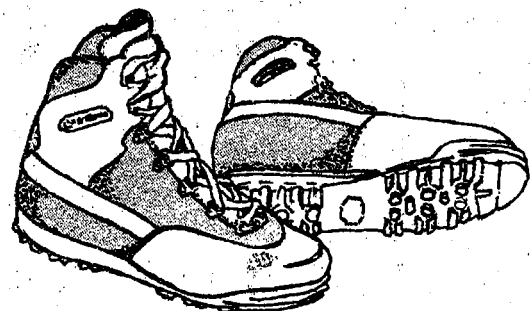


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THE K TO K IN A DAY

10 September 1994

David Trinder

Kookaburras sounded the alarm at 4.30 AM, the programmed wake up time, somebody hit the sleep button, and they laughed again nine minutes later, and this time, they woke the group.

They were a group of nine walkers led by Jan Mohandas and one supporter, Tony Holgate. At six, the sky was lightening, the stars had disappeared, the air was cold and still, and Jan took off with his group across the Kanangra Plateau.

There were some drifts of hail/snow on the plateau, and as they walked through the hard native bushes a small but intense orange light crashed over a low billowing cloud. It trimmed the cloud with gold but within seconds the light was so bright the eyes turned away but the golden light fell on the sharp peaks and spurs of the Thurat Spires and the orange coloured Kanangra Walls. The picture was blue / purple hazy mountains all around, orange cliffs, the Kanangra Creek valley half filled with a white fluffy mist and the sky was bright light blue with some white and gold low clouds.

There was no hesitation amongst the group, they were walking fast, jumping, climbing, puffing, getting warm, and they stopped at Crafts Walls for a few minutes to re-group, take in new and expel old water and to remove some clothes. Out along the Gangerang Range, no time to lose, "have to be at Cloudmaker by nine" he said. The range is like a Chinese dragon, Crafts Walls are at its collar, and the various peaks along the range are like the bumps on the dragon's back. The first is Mount High and Mighty, a climb of two hundred and fifty metres, then down and up to Stormbreaker. There is no rest for tired legs, just keep walking fast. Every step is different, some one

metre, some the length of a foot, eyes are busy looking for the next foot placement, at two per second; on the point of a rock, on a round stone that rolls, on leaves, around a grass tree and don't let up. Down a slope, run to catch up, up a hill and try to keep up.

Ranges both sides are still hazy blue, the shape of Kanangra Creek is clear because of its white fluffy lake, and valleys on the right irregularly filled with white mist also, the dragon is lying in milk. A break and regroup at Stormbreaker where Tony turned back and another at Cloudmaker "we're going well, it's eight forty five," he says. Down from Cloudmaker, the pace eased, and the track softened, vegetation was thin short trees, and they came to Dex Creek. Morning tea was taken, scroggin and water, but there was no clean water to collect. On arrival, the birds turned quiet and hid, but after a few minutes they relaxed and started their chirping communications - it was like an aviary.

Getting out of Dex Creek and onto the ridge to Mount Strongleg is a difficult navigation exercise. It was solved slowly and well with map and compass, then the pace quickened for the downhill walk to a half lunch, one sandwich, at Mount Strongleg. If you like downhill there is 300 metres of it from Cloudmaker to Strongleg, and another 700 metres down to the Cox's, but there is a good chance your knees will hurt. They shuffled down off the dragon, and the knees did hurt.

At river level they landed at Konangaroo Clearing on Kanangra Creek and had to take a short but pleasant walk to the Cox's and the bottom of Yellow Pup spur. If you like uphill there is 900 metres to go, but there is a good chance your leg muscles will hurt. The first 600 metres up Yellow Pup Spur to Mount Yellow Dog did make muscles hurt - they were crying out

for a rest, but they had to keep up with the leader. At the top, they had a break and the other sandwich was taken. On their way up, they passed Dingo Creek, Howling Dog Ridge, Brown Dog Gully, Spotted Dog Ridge, Sharptooth Gully, and Ghost Dogs Gully.

They were now half way and the sun was past halfway. From Mount Yellow Dog, keeping up with the leader meant a half-walk, half-run on the flats and downhills and a tiring fast climb up the nose of Debert and Taro's ladders. In that part of the Wild Dog Range they passed Brindle Pup Ridge, Blue Pup Spur, Cattle Dog Ridge, Bad Dog Gully, Black Horse Ridge, Faithful Hound Ridge on the left and as they crossed Kennel Flat they passed White Dog Creek, Grizzled Dog Ridge, Grey Dog Ridge, Black Dog Chasm and Growler Ridge on the right.

Tony Holgate had been met by Kay Chan and Tony Manes at Kanangra. They brought the cars around from Kanangra and were joined by Oliver Crawford, all of whom met the walkers with drinks and oranges at the end of Narrow Neck. Along the Narrow Neck fire trail the leader out-walked the others but they all walked out between 5.45 and 6.45 PM. Thus ended this year's K to K, the weather was perfect, the pace fast and the walkers justifiably proud, tired and sore.

Instead of carrying emergency gear for a breakdown, mobile phones were carried by the walkers and by Tony Holgate. Contact was actually made between Yellow Dog and Narrow Neck. It is good to see this equipment being used.

The walkers were Jean Kendall, Michele Powell, Tom Wenman, Eddy Giacomel, Ken Smith, Bob Horder, Morrie Ward, David Trinder and the leader Jan Mohandas, and they give their thanks to him and their supporters.

From Kanangra Walls

Gingra Track-Campagnoni Pass-
Ti-Willa-Cloudmaker-Kanangra
Car Park

27th 28th August 1994

Jan Mohandas (leader), Tony Creighton, Maureen Carter, Jean Kendall, David Carter, David Thurston, Allan Wells.

Allan Wells.

We gathered at Kanangra car park at 8:30 after a cool night spent at Boyd River Crossing for some of us and a long drive from Sydney for the others. After introductions and greetings we headed off for Kanangra Walls on a beautiful clear morning, stopping at the usual lookout spot to take in that magnificent gorge scenery of Kanangra Falls, Thurat Spires etc, that one never seems to tire of. We were soon heading down through Gordon Smith Pass and on to Crafts Walls where we had morning tea. Sidling around to the eastern end of the walls we pushed on to Pages Pinnacle where some of us climbed that massive boulder while the others had another short break. The views to the south from here are outstanding with flat topped Mt. Colong, Yerranderie Peak, Byrnes Gap, The Axehead and Broken Rock Range easy to identify. Easy walking down Crafts Ridge brought us to the Gingra and Gabes creek junction at 11:45 am and lunch at a campsite roughly below 4th Top on the Gingra Range around 12:30. I've been told you can still find pockets of Red Cedar trees in the higher reaches of Gingra Creek, missed

by the timber getters who put in the road only as far as the junction with Gabes Creek early this century.

After lunch we continued down a very dry Gingra Creek, at times walking on the old road with its dry stone walling, till we reached our campsite for the night amongst a stand of young Casuarinas on the bank opposite Ti Willa buttress (around 4pm I think). This is a lovely spot marred only by cow and horse droppings which are now a problem in this whole area i.e. cows and horses. A hearty happy hour with a special brew (courtesy of Tom) was enjoyed after some miscreants were finished playing chasings with a few trout in a small pool nearby. For me one of the highlights of bushwalking is sitting around the campfire at night engaged in happy conversation about many and varied topics including past walking trips. This night was no exception.

After dinner Tony, Dave and I were kept busy boiling and cooling water in order to have three litres each to carry for the next day. Thank goodness for Tom's large billy and our wine skins. By the time we'd finished everyone else had 'hit the sack'.

An early rising and breakfast saw us departing around 7am, heaving and straining up Ti Willa buttress to reach a huge cave at the base of the cliff where we had a break before edging our way around to the east and up the spikes and chain of Ron Compagnoni's Pass. A small climb onto Ti Willa Hill for morning tea where we noticed a lot of smoke haze in the distant gullies and valleys.

It was now our privilege to savour the delights of Ti Willa scrub. Amazingly I didn't hear one profanity uttered as we pushed through, trying to stick to "the track". On the climb up towards Cloudmaker we stopped at a rocky knoll which afforded superb views to the south and west to the Gangerang Range, Crafts Walls etc. To the south rose a large column of smoke somewhere near Yerranderie, from what I hoped was a well contained hazard reduction. Another short rest on the top of Mt Cloudmaker with a strong, pleasant, cooling breeze but no visitors book in the aluminium container! Lunch was in the saddle at the bottom of Cloudmaker, having observed another fire in Megalong Valley on the way down. I was informed the following night, while firefighting at Mt York, that a number of bushfire brigades had been called to fight a fire in Galong creek that weekend.

After lunch the walk along the ridge was quite pleasant till we came within view of Mt Berry. "Oh woe, woe and thrice woe!" and similar expletives were muttered by yours truly. Maureen and David had warned me of this! Jan said I must learn to love climbing to enjoy it. "I do love climbing. I do, I do!" I kept telling my heart, lungs and legs but they weren't having a bar of it. After Mt Berry the rest of the walk was over familiar territory, having walked it the day before. We arrived back at the cars which had not been broken into or damaged, much to the relief of their owners, by 5:30. A most enjoyable trip, thank you, Jan. □

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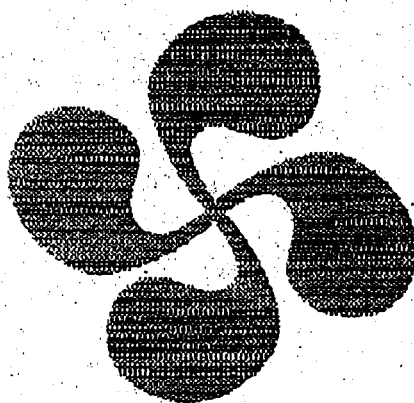
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Trip Reports-

Ian Wolfe

1. 28/7-1/8 4 day Hut Crawl. Not enough snow to do the trip as programmed yet again !. However a very acceptable compromise was provided to the eight participants. Up over the Rolling Grounds to Schlink Hilton on day 1 in a strong wind and limited visibility. Over the Kerries to Mawsons for lunch and a tour around the Cup and Saucer on day 2. Snowed overnight so down to Valentines and then up Duck Creek to camp at Whites in lovely new snow on day 3. Down the road to the Aqueduct at horse Camp and then back to the Penstocks to end the trip on day 4.

2. I cancelled the long Vic trip as my spy reported that there was only "slush" on The Dargo High Plains. Instead the 4 of us conducted a 7 day "K to K". Perfect weather, perfect snow, climbed every mountain and were on Kossie for arvo tea on day 5. Spent the last 2 days touring around Kossie. Then out for a day off before going back 'up' for 3 days. Dug a snow cave at the top of Twin Valleys and toured as a wind down.

3. 15-19/9 Trip as planned with 5 participants. Had Grey Mare Hut to ourselves. Great day trip to Grey Mare Mountain skiing in the sun on day 2. Day 3 had limited visibility but we skied through the murk to Grey Mare Bogong and Rocky Bogong to be rewarded by slightly clearing weather. The ski out on day 4 was very cold and resulted in the diesel in our vehicle waxing up. This enforced a stay of an additional night in Cesjacks Hut before we could get the "beast" mobile.

4. 29/9-3/10 Skied into Illawong and then to the "arc of tree" to camp before doing a side trip to Mt. Anderson and Pounds Creek. Day 2 was lovely and saw us climb up onto the range and ski out to the end of Watsons Crag. Came home

via Blue Lake and the Snowy River. Rained cats and dogs that night leading to a foot of snow disappearing and turning the remnant into soggy mush. This (plus a damp sleeping bag) induced us to ski out that afternoon and return home a day early (at least we had one great day and one OK day).

Given the rain and the poor state of the thin snow cover the likelihood of my November trip going is low. □

Campfire Thoughts

Jim Brown

This fire by night-
Voices lifted in song-
Be memories bright-
That may bear you through days too long,
Not here the passions of bygone years,
Not here the sadness, the pain, the fears,
Come peace enwrap us round
As does the leaping light,
Come peace new found in
communion of song by night.

An Expression of Gratitude

Jan Mohandas

Several Sydney Bushwalkers, members of their families and friends came to help and support the walkers who participated in the Kanangra to Katoomba walk on the 10th September 1994 and the six foot track walk from Katoomba to Jenolan House on the 17th September 1994. The walkers were assisted at different stages by providing them with drinks (fruit juices, coffee tea and water) and food (fruits, biscuits, cakes and other items), massage for aching legs, transport, and above all encouragement and company. It would have been difficult to conduct these two day walks without the

dedication of the people who came to help and support the walkers.

On behalf of all the walkers who participated in these walks, I would like to thank everyone who came to help and support and express my sincere appreciation for their dedication. The weather was very kind to us and everyone had a wonderful time.

The Jenolan House is an excellent place to spend an evening among friends after a walk, have a fabulous dinner, wander around to enjoy the surroundings, have a good night's sleep and take your time to relax with a hearty breakfast.

As it is becoming difficult to get accommodation at The Jenolan House for a single night during the winter months, next year's Six Foot track walk will be on the Saturday, 2nd September 1995. Several rooms have been booked for single night's accommodation (dinner and breakfast the next morning) for Saturday 2nd September 1995. Those who are already planning to do the walk next year and stay at The Jenolan House or those who do not wish to walk but would like to come and stay at The Jenolan House next year may let me know their intention so that more rooms can be booked if necessary. □

The Wombat

As we splash along the track
eyes alert and ears pinned back

You will have seen those queer
square turds

And thought, but not expressed
in words

The strain of such a defecation
boggles the imagination

This is not done to entertain us
the Wombat has an oblong anus

So should your slumbers be
disturbed by shrieks and cries
don't be perturbed

Eyes closed, teeth clenched and
racked in pain
The wombat has just crapped again.

"YOU SHOULD ENJOY THIS NEXT BIT"

(Reprinted by permission from The National Times in "Tandanya" - Adelaide Bushwalkers Magazine - June/August 1984). Tony Cunneen.

Some adventure tours have to be viewed carefully. I'd always wanted to be a mountaineer, so I did some push-ups, jogged around the block a few times then barrelled off to North Wales.

At the Plas Y Brenin Centre for Mountain Activities I enrolled in one week of sheer terror called Introductory Rock Climbing. As with any adventure, all parameters of daily existence are changed, not the last of which lies in your trust of language.

Now the subtle suggestion can mask a horrible alternative. When the brochure says: "Candidates are advised to bring wetsuits," what it really means is that people who fail to bring wetsuits will find themselves having to survive Arctic conditions in their underpants.

Plas Y Brenin is set in the Welsh mountains near Snowdon. Each day rock climbing students are taken to various cliffs then, accompanied by an instructor, begin their fearful ascent.

On the second day a dour Scot took myself and another student in the team up a gloomy gash of wet rock in the Cwm Idwal and introduced it as The Devil's Staircase. Then he growled: "I think ye'll find this interesting. It's got some nice exposure." I was intrigued by this description. What made a climb "interesting"? What constituted a "nice exposure"? I soon found out.

Scared out of my wits, trying to move from a bridge position to a balanced hold on a bulge of rock I realised that I was now in an "interesting" position. The fact that there was a drop of 200 feet or so below me was "nice exposure".

I knew now that the words of the instructor were heavy with implication and should be interpreted as such. These experts use a private system for grading climbs. What follows is a handy guide for climbing novices so that you can make sense of this system. Climbs can be

"Interesting" - Scary.

"Technical" - Terrifying

"Sustained" - Terrifying for a very long period of time.

"Thoughtful" - A spiritual state of mind rarely reached by other people except perhaps passengers on trans-Pacific flights who have just been told that the plane has run out of fuel in flight.

Then there are those wry comments made, while actually climbing:

"You'll enjoy this next bit" - Nothing in your entire life will be worse than the next few moments.

"You'll find the next 10 feet quite thought-provoking" - You'll need supernatural powers to get any further.

"This is pretty strenuous for a Grade 4 climb" - We've come up the wrong way.

On occasions more specific descriptions of the rock conditions are given: "A bit fangery" -

You'll have to claw your way up using your fingernails and teeth.

"A bit slimy" - Like glass.

"It's rather steep" - It's an overhang

"Good exposure" - A long drop.

"Unprotected" - No rope

"Open to the weather" - A blizzard

"Dubious rock" - An avalanche.

As we, the novices, struggled to sort out our equipment, we heard a number of comments regarding our handling of belays, runners, slings and ropes:

"Your belay is loose" - You might fall

"Look at that bloody belay" - I might fall

There is a subtle scale of implied criticism used in the teaching of handling equipment in the proper and safe manner. Our instructors used the Socratic method - teaching by asking questions.

"Are you happy with that?" - You're wrong

"Are you quite happy with that?" - If you move you'll fall.

"Are you really quite happy with that?" - If you move we'll all fall.

Then finally there are the instructions and exhortations delivered while you are actually climbing.

"Well I suppose you could do it that way" - Never do it that way.

"Sort yourself out" - You're upside down.

"Keep your head" - Stop screaming.

"That would be most unethical" - Don't use the tree.

"Think carefully" - Pray

"That was a bit of a mistake" - Did you hurt yourself?

"I think he's having a wee bit of trouble" - I think he's dead

"Coming unstuck" - Falling.

"A bit dicey" - Hitting the bottom

Soon we took refuge in such expressions ourselves:

"Can I just think about this a bit" - I'm stuck

"This rope's tangled" - I've tangled the rope.

Well, we all survived. As well as learning about climbing we learnt about ourselves. For this all credit is due to the young, dedicated and talented staff of Plas Y Brenin, whose climbing ability was matched only by their mastery of the understatement.

Once, as I clambered, quivering with fear over one of those very severe climbs at Tremadog I was greeted by a cheery "That was fun" from my instructor. I thought he must have gone a different way from me. □



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WILDERNESS LOST

In March 1985 the Colong Committee (now the Colong Foundation) comprised largely of bushwalkers, asked the then Minister for Conservation, Bob Carr, to introduce a Bill for a Wilderness Act. In an address to the S.B.W. in their club room on Jan. 22nd 1986, he announced his support for the Act. A Wilderness Study Group, comprising representatives of the Colong Foundation, the National Parks Association, The Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, was appointed to frame the provisions of the Act. The Group recommended that any individual or organisation should be able to nominate a wilderness area, for the nomination to be assessed by the NPWS, and a period for submissions on the assessment. Since the State's wilderness areas were already well known to bushwalkers and nature lovers this was a realistic means of identifying and evaluating wilderness.

Four years later no areas had been declared under the Act, a situation which might have continued indefinitely had not Terry Metherell, who had resigned from the Liberal Party, proposed to introduce a Wilderness (Declaration of New Areas) Bill, which might have resulted in the defeat of the Government. This enabled Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment to announce a timetable for the assessment of the 10 areas which had been nominated and a period for the receipt of submissions on the nominations, which had been made by the Colong Foundation, the Wilderness Society and the Confederation of Bush Walking Clubs. The NPWS made only minor changes to the nominated areas and in some cases added to them. The total area assessed was 800,000 ha. Between 70 and 80 per cent of submissions were in favour of the assessed

areas except in the case of Goodradigbee, a 4WD preserve, where only 54% were in favour.

A year later, on Dec. 23rd 1993, the Government announced the declaration of 350,000 ha of the assessed areas, a declaration which it described as "a Christmas present to our grandchildren." The assessed areas had been fragmented and trimmed to allow access for 4WD vehicles, trail bikes and horse riders. An example of this was the Deua Wilderness, nominated by the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.

The announcement was bitterly attacked by the anti-wilderness lobby, led by the anti-wilderness faction within the Government, mainly composed of National Party members, two of whom threatened to resign, putting the Government's tenure of office in doubt. The "declarations" became "proposals" and in order to gain time and appease the rebels, the Government appointed the Surveyor General, whose expertise lay in the demarcation of land tenures rather than in ecology or park management, to report on three of the areas.

The Surveyor General sought the views of 4WD clubs, horse riders, miners, graziers, loggers and everybody else with an interest in exploiting the areas for profit or pleasure. Notably missing was any reference to the interest of bushwalkers, who are the principal users of many wilderness areas. Nor was it recognised that wilderness is not solely for the benefit of local interest groups, but for the people of the State and the nation.

Acting on the Surveyor-General's report, the 350,000 ha were further fragmented, trimmed and truncated to allow vehicular and equestrian access, leaving only 113,000 ha (1% of the State's wilderness) for declaration. Bushwalkers are only too aware of the damage caused by such access, but we

don't have to take their word for it. The State Pollution Control Commission, in its report on the recreational use of off-road vehicles, stated that *The use of vehicles in areas with high wilderness values, jeopardise wilderness qualities. The desire to explore and trail-blaze areas of virgin country can cause immeasurable damage to flora and fauna leaving deep impressions as vehicles tyre-spin their way to gain traction in rough terrain.* The damage to tracks caused by horses is only too evident in areas such as Mobbs Swamp and Ku-ring-gai. The National Parks Association opposes the use of horses not only in wilderness but in all national parks.

On Sept 22nd Bob Carr moved "That this House censures the Premier for breaching his promise on wilderness." He quoted his words when speaking to the Wilderness Bill in 1987, when he said "...if we fail in the task now before us, if we do not accept the responsibility to protect some of what remains, then we must surely and rightly expect the condemnation of this and future generations. He also re-affirmed his 1987 commitment to declare 12 new wilderness areas together with 20 new national parks in his first year of office.

In reply Government speakers ignored the purpose of wilderness protection, which is to preserve the last substantial remnants of the natural environment and the last refuge of many endangered species. Nor did they recognise the damage caused by the interests which were served by the reduction of the wilderness areas from 800,000 to 113,000 ha. All the well worn anti-wilderness themes were repeated, such as:

▷ That there is no "access" to wilderness. There is nothing to prevent anyone from entering a wilderness provided they-

continued on page14 ▷

The September General Meeting.

Barry Wallace

It was 2001 when your scribe, serving as chairman, called the 20 or so members present to order and began the meeting. There were apologies from Denise Shaw and Greta James. New member Shiela Speters was welcomed into membership in the usual way.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and received with no matters arising.

Correspondence, apart from the mass of commercial entreaties and reciprocally supplied copies of magazines, included a letter from a Kangaroo Valley real estate company regarding the Shoalhaven City Council's plans for future rural development. They were of course acting in a purely altruistic fashion in this, though there was some suggestion that they would be prepared to point out the possible benefits to affected parties. A letter from Gestetner drew our attention to an apparently overdue account, at 45 days. Brian Harvey had written to us accepting our offer of honorary membership. The Westpac helicopter rescue service has written thanking us for our donation and the recognition that it conveyed. Natural Areas Limited has written confirming our ownership of 500 shares and offering us the opportunity to write out our own scrip should we have the time and resources. Morag Ryder wrote concerning the recent outbreak of thefts from cars parked at Kanangra Walls, musing on the possibility of organising minders for cars parked during walks. Matters arising from the correspondence included an assurance that the outstanding account from Gestetner will be dealt with in the near future and some discussion of police efforts to apprehend the persons responsible for thefts from cars at Kanangra.

The treasurer's report indicated that we received income of \$1,288 spent \$9,490 and closed the month with a balance of \$1,668. Unlike last month's report, where we went on, on, at a maddening pace at least twice to

the walks reports, this month was a relatively placid affair. The first weekend covered was 12 13 14 August with Greta James leading a party of 9 on a walk re-routed from the Red Rocks area to Kanangra Walls due to the shortage of water at Red Rocks. The fates were not kind. Strong gale force winds over Friday night gave way to strong winds throughout the weekend as the party went via Pages Pinnacle Gingra Creek Kowmung River and Rootes Ridge. They returned to the cars around 1700 to find that they had been broken into and any items of value stolen. Wilf Hilder's Federation walk stages 11 and 12 is somewhat of a mystery. Some informants said there were 4 on the walk, others that the walk had been moved back two weeks. You can either write your own script or ask Wilf sometime. Tom Wenman's Saturday day walk in the Megalong Valley saw the 16 starters getting away at 0730 for what was described as a good day. Eddie Giacomel also reported a good day for the 15 who went on his Sunday walk from Evans Lookout to Perrys Lookdown and back via the Cliff Top Track. The party of 16 who went on Errol Sheedy's Sunday walk from Engadine to Waterfall enjoyed fine conditions and a good walk.

Oliver Crawford led a group of 9 on his Wollombi N.P. walk over the weekend of 19, 20, 21 August. They encountered some rain on the Saturday evening but otherwise all went well. Jan Mohandas deferred his Six Foot Track in a day walk to some other date. Bill Holland reported serious deficiencies with his Wahroonga to Mt. Kurin-gai Sunday walk. It seems the party of 24 were unable to procure coffee at Appletree Bay.

The weekend of 26, 27, 28 August saw Jan Mohandas leading 8 brave souls on his Gingra Creek - Cloudmaker stroll. The weather was hot, there was little water in Gingra Creek and there were fires in the distance to add to the excitement. There was no report for Laurie Bloom's cycling day at Buxton Plateau. Laurie Bore led a party of 13 through fields of flowers in warm to hot conditions on his Little Beach to Box Head Sunday walk. David Trinder was

ill so Greg Bridge took over as leader of the 15 starters who came to do the walk from Victoria Falls to Evans Lookout on Sunday. He re-routed the walk somewhat and details were sketchy but it did go.

Ian Wolfe led an extended ski touring trip over the period 18 to 29 August. The program got it wrong again! They went to NSW not Victoria. It seems the snow was better north of the border. The 4 member group spent their time making a crossing trip from Kiandra to Kosciusko in 4 days and visited Twin Valleys for a side trip.

The first trip on the Spring walks program saw Ian Debert and Oliver Crawford cancelling their trips to Kanangra and the Wollongambe respectively. Bill Capon saved us from complete failure on the overnight trips front by leading a party of 8 on his Morton N.P. walk. They enjoyed a lazy Saturday but paid for it on the Sunday, which turned out to be rather tough. Jan Mohandas led a party of 16 (or was it 21?) on his Saturday day walk from The Pinnacles to Bluegum and return with side trip up Perrys Lookdown. The conditions were either cool or hot depending on whom one believes. It's all in the mind you know. Ken Smith's Sunday walk in the Glenbrook area saw a party of 28 sweating it out in conditions that were generally agreed to be warm. The walk was described as good.

September 10, 11 had Greta James leading a group of 5 on her Splendour Rock trip in excellent weather with cool, fine conditions. Their numbers increased to 7 on the return via Breakfast Creek as 2 intending participants, delayed by vehicle problems, re-joined the main party after coming in down the Tinpot track. Wilf deferred stages 13 and 14 of the Federation walk due to a mix-up over the necessity to book on certain train services. Jan Mohandas had a team of 9 gallopers away from Kanangra walls at around 0600 on his Saturday stroll from Kanangra to Katoomba. The weather was glorious but Dex Creek was reported as not flowing. Maurice Smith led 4 on his

continued on page 14 >

Meeting notes cont from p13 >

Saturday walk in the Lane Cove N.P. and Bill Holland had a mob of 34 out enjoying good weather on his Sunday walk to Tootie Creek and back. All of which was probably just a conspiracy to bring the walks reports to an upbeat conclusion.

The conservation report detailed some of the shortcomings in the NSW government's December 1993 "Christmas gift to our children" by way of wilderness declarations. The size of wilderness to be declared has shrunk to 113,000 hectares from an initial area of 350,000 hectares which was the surviving portion of 800,000 hectares assessed. The portions that are now proposed to be declared, survivors of a National Party assault, are small, fragmented areas. Some of the proposed declarations have been either lost in the melee or ignored. The last remaining wilderness officer with the NPWS has resigned. There appear to be no plans to replace the position. The opposition is to move a censure motion, providing details of the failures.

The Confederation report covered the successful AGM and Bush Dance held at Mudgee. There was also some discussion of Confederation's proposed insurance cover for affiliated clubs. It seems the public liability policy may have optional extensions to cover specified risks (such as Coolana)? There is also an optional sports injury cover, but details are sketchy to non-existent at present.

There were no matters of general business so we proceeded to the announcements. Once people had all that off their collective chests the meeting closed at 2101. □

The Agony of an Uncertain Prospect

Tom Wenman

There is, I feel, nothing more agonising or frustrating than the aspect of a doubtful prospect.

The more desired the prospect, the greater the anguish caused by the uncertainty of its achievement. h'mm!

So might many walks leaders feel when confronted by the prospect of their walk 'not going'.

As a matter of fact, to my somewhat uncertain estimate, not much has been written about the feelings of walks' leaders regarding their proposed ventures. I intend, in part and in some small way to repair this omission. First of all, there is the obligation to commit oneself some three months or more in advance to leading a walk in a certain area at a certain time. Generally, from my experience, there is a great enthusiasm when a walk is placed on the programme. Sometimes, however, three months down the track one tends to wonder about one's motivation. The weather is different for a start, and - ah! the weather!

Herein lies the cause of many leader's anguish! - and I am not just writing about a situation which may occur whilst a walk is in progress.

In the week leading up to a walk, the weather is all important, including the weather in Sydney. On a recent proposed expedition I listened with equanimity to the forecasters statement that it would rain on Monday, Tuesday and possibly Wednesday, because he also said that the rain could clear to the north - and we were walking in the west. However, on this occasion, Tuesday came and went, Wednesday did something similar, but the cloud cover did not, and neither did the rain. Clearing to the north became the emotive phrase, the overhead cloud cover and the falling rain became the ghastly reality.

Having gained a number of starters, your average walks leader gets a bit tense about the situation when Thursday turns in a very wet performance. Confident statements about the weather changing for the good, and of course the statement that what is happening in Sydney bears no relationship to what is happening in the proposed walking area tend sometimes to sound a bit defensive and don't always convince prospective starters. In the event, the bold and the uninformed participate, and then there are those who suddenly have important business meetings, family demands, or are feeling a trifle unwell. Some are refreshingly blunt about the situation though, "Its pissing down outside and

I'm not coming on your walk" a recent starter advised me. What could I say? It was!! In the event the starter started, we had a great walk, the weather was glorious, and the clearing to the North took place on Saturday. □

Wilderness Lost cont'd from p 12 >

- they get out of their vehicles and off their horses.

> That wilderness is only for the young and fit. Anyone can enjoy it. A modicum of fitness, which most can achieve, is necessary only for overnight walks.

> That valuable resources are "locked up" in wilderness. This argument overlooks the fact that wilderness consists of the least productive country in the State. Otherwise it would not be wilderness. "Locking up" this country leaves 96% of the State for economic exploitation.

> That wilderness is solely for the benefit of bushwalkers. The purpose of declaration is environmental preservation, but supposing it was for the benefit of bushwalkers. Why shouldn't provision be made for this form of recreation, in which more people participate than in any sport?

> Billions of dollars are "locked up" in sporting facilities. Wilderness preservation is virtually cost free.

> That the areas are not "pristine" Of course they are not. The whole State is affected by some form of development, but the wilderness areas are the best we have.

> That there are pests weeds and feral animals in the areas. Again, of course there are. They are everywhere.

The wilderness campaign has been a boost for environmental awareness. It has brought nature conservation to public attention and engendered widespread support. The censure motion, only the third passed in 55 years, is strong proof of public concern. And, as Pam Allan, Shadow Minister for the Environment, pointed out, it has united the conservation movement. □